

REMARKS

Claims 26-29 and 32-46 are currently pending. Claims 26, 36-39, and 41 are in independent form.

Claims 28, 38, and 41-45 are currently withdrawn from consideration. Claims 30 and 31 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Without conceding the propriety of the outstanding rejection of Claims 30 and 31, Applicants submit that the outstanding rejection of these claims is moot and should be withdrawn.

Claims 26, 32, 33, 36, 37, and 39 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found in the original specification at least, for example, on page 40, line 22, *et seq.* No new matter has been added.

Claims 26, 27, 29-37, 39, 40, and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Wiedemer et al. (U.S. 2004/0182270) in view of Komatsu et al. (U.S. 6,059,407). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 26 relates to an image forming method. As amended, the method includes, *inter alia*, the step of applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink, onto an intermediate transfer body having a surface to which a hydrophilic treatment, where energy is applied to the surface, has been performed.

The Office Action contends, on page 3, that Wiedemer et al., discloses applying a liquid for reacting with an ink on an intermediate transfer body having a surface to which the hydrophilic treatment by applying energy has been performed. To support this contention the Office Action cites to paragraphs [0012] and [0032], as well as Figures 1 and 2.

Wiedemer et al. relates to a method and device for producing different printed images on the same print substrate. The cited portion discloses a dampening system 30 which transfers a

dampening agent such as water from a dampening agent reservoir 38 to the surface of the plate cylinder 20. In the alternative, an ice layer can be used as a dampening layer. Once applied, the dampening agent layer is selectively removed via energy addition by means of a laser system 40, thus generating the desired image structuring. (Wiedemer et al., ¶ [0032]-[0033]).

By use of rollers 12, 14, 16, and 17 of the inking system, ink is transferred from the ink reservoir 18 to regions without the dampening agent. The regions bearing a dampening agent or, respectively, an ice layer “are ink-repelling and accept no ink.” (Wiedemer et al., ¶ [0035]).

As Applicants understand, the Office Action contends, on page 3, that the dampening system 30 of Wiedemer et al. corresponds to the liquid, previously recited in Claim 26. However, Applicants submit that the liquid in Wiedemer et al. is ink-repelling and therefore is not for coagulating a colorant of ink. Therefore, Applicants submit that Wiedemer et al. does not teach or suggest, among other features, an image forming method including, *inter alia*, the step of applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink, onto an intermediate transfer body. Accordingly, Wiedemer et al. does not disclose features recited in Claim 26.

The Office Action introduces Komatsu et al. to allegedly disclose a recording system using an ink jet type recording system. (Office Action, p. 3). In addition, with respect to previously recited Claims 31 and 32, the Office Action contends, on page 4, that Komatsu et al. discloses a liquid which contains a component for coagulating a colorant of the ink. To support this contention, the Office Action cites to column 3, lines 8-42, of Komatsu et al. (Office Action, p. 4).

The cited portion of Komatsu et al. discloses that the recording method employs a surfactant. Numerous examples of the surfactant are listed in the cited portion of Komatsu et al. Komatsu et al. discloses that the presence of the surfactant prevents the ink image 5 from being

excessively broadened or flowed, so that the ink image 5 can be formed at an accurate position without a significant variation in the location of the ink image. (Komatsu et al., column 4, lines 27-30). However, even so, Komatsu et al. does not explicitly disclose that the surfactant coagulates a colorant of ink, but rather that surfactants prevents ink from being excessively broadened or flowed. Therefore, Applicants submit that Komatsu et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Wiedemer et al. discussed above.

Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of combining Wiedemer et al. and Komatsu et al., Applicants submit that, at least for the reasons discussed above, the proposed combination, even if proper, does not disclose features recited in Claim 26.

Independent Claims 36, 37, and 39 relate to respective image forming methods, each of which includes the step of applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink. Therefore, at least for the reasons set forth in the discussion of the applied references above, even assuming, *arguendo*, that the proposed combination is proper, Applicants submit that the proposed combination does not disclose features recited in Claims 36, 37, and 39.

Claims 27, 29, 32-35, 40, and 46 depend either directly or indirectly from one of the independent claims discussed above. Therefore, at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to the independent claims, Applicants submit that the proposed combination of the applied references, even if proper, does not disclose features recited in Claims 27, 29, 32-35, 40, and 46.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of Claims 26, 27, 29, 32-37, 39, 40, and 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present invention, as set forth in the independent claims, is patentable over the applied references. The dependent claims set forth additional features of

Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested. Applicants submit that the subject application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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